MORTON

WHY I BELIEVE THE BOOK OF MORMON TO BE THE WORD OF GOD

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Why I Believe The Book of Mormon TO BE The Word of God

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Why I Believe the Book of Mormon to Be the Word of God

By William A. Morton

"Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me."—John 5:39.

This little booklet is issued in response to numerous requests received from people who have heard me speak on the Book of Mormon, and who were desirous of seeing the address in print. It is a simple, unpretentious effort, yet we know that "by very small and simple means the Lord doth confound the wise, and bringeth about the salvation of many souls."

For almost thirty years I have been a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. During this time I have read and studied the Book of Mormon a great deal, and I say, in all sincerity, that the more I study the book the more thoroughly I become convinced that it is a divinely inspired record.

I believe implicitly in the Book of Mormon; I believe it to be the Word of God to the Nephites and Lamanites who once inhabited this continent, even as I believe the Bible to be the Word of God to the Jews and also to the Gentiles.

If I did not believe Joseph Smith's testimony con-

cerning the Book of Mormon, I could not believe his testimony that he had seen God the Father and Jesus Christ, His Son, and had conversed with them in open vision; neither could I believe his testimony that he had been visited by John the Baptist, and had been ordained by him to the Aaronic priesthood; that he had been ministered unto by Peter, James, and John, and had been ordained by them an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ; that he had seen Moses, and received from him the keys of the gathering of Israel from the nations of the earth, and the leading of the Ten Tribes from the land of the north; that he had seen the Prophet Elijah, and had obtained from him the keys of turning "the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers.

What will the Book of Mormon do for us? It will help us solve any theological problem that may be presented to us. By way of illustration: When I was a youth, serving an apprenticeship to the printing trade, one of the printers took delight in propounding riddles and problems to his fellow workmen. One day he said to the other compositors: "I have a new problem for you: A blacksmith had an anvil composed of four pieces, with which he could weigh from one pound up to forty pounds. Find the weight of each piece." The printers put their heads together and in a short time the problem was solved. One piece of the anvil weighed one pound, another piece weighed three pounds, another, nine pounds, and the fourth piece twenty-seven pounds. With these weights a person can weigh from one pound up to forty pounds.

Now, once we become thoroughly convinced that the Book of Mormon is true, it will, as I have said, solve any theological problem that may confront us. Do we want knowledge concerning God, His Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost? We can get it in the Book of Mormon. Would we know concerning the pre-existence of spirits? Such knowledge may be obtained from the Book of Mormon. Do we desire to know if the fall of man and the atonement made by Jesus Christ are facts? The Book of Mormon will answer these questions. Do we wish to know what the principles and ordinances of the Gospel of Christ are? They are taught in plainness in the Book of Mormon. If we desire information regarding the intermediate state – the state in which the spirits of men live between the time of death and the resurrection – we can find it in the Book of Mormon. Is our faith in the doctrine of the resurrection weak? The Book of Mormon will greatly strengthen it. So you see that the Book of Mormon is one of the most precious gifts that God has given to man.

There are, as the reader, no doubt, knows, two theories respecting the origin of the Book of Mormon. One of these is the Solomon Spaulding theory, which has been strongly advocated by anti-Mormons in order to keep people from believing the Book of Mormon to be a divinely inspired record. According to this theory, a man named Solomon Spaulding, a graduate of Dartmouth College, Ohio, wrote a book in which he purported to give an account of the origin of the American Indians. After Mr. Spaulding's death, the manuscript, so it is asserted, fell into the hands of Joseph

Smith, who, with others, conspired to publish it and present it to the world as a sacred history of the ancient inhabitants of America.

This theory is so absurd that it is surprising to me it did not "like the new moon, set with its rising." Solomon Spaulding, be it known, was a Presbyterian minister; but this fact has been carefully concealed by those who have advocated the theory that Mr. Spaulding was the author of the Book of Mormon. Had they let this fact be known undoubtedly they would have aroused suspicion and greatly weakened their argument. For this reason: Presbyterian ministers do not write books condemning in strong terms certain tenets of their church. There is in the Book of Mormon much that is at variance with doctrines taught by the Presbyterian church; indeed, there is very little in the Book of Mormon that is compatible with Presbyterianism. There is not a Presbyterian church in the world that believes in the Book of Mormon. On the contrary, Presbyterian ministers have been the loudest in condemning the book. A Presbyterian minister could not write the Book of Mormon if he would; and he would not write it if he could. I will here state that the Spaulding manuscript was discovered in 1884, and is at present in the library of Oberlin College, Ohio. On examination it was found to bear no resemblance whatever to the Book of Mormon. The theory that Solomon Spaulding was the author of the Book of Mormon should never be mentioned again – outside a museum.

Let us now turn our attention to the other theory – the one held and advocated by the Church; namely,

that a heavenly messenger named Moroni appeared to Joseph Smith and told the youth about a set of Gold plates which were hid in a hill a short distance from his home, on which was engraved a history of the ancient inhabitants of America; that four years later Joseph Smith was permitted to take the plates from their hiding place; that through the gift and power of God he translated them into English and presented to the world the Book of Mormon.

Now, it is a well known fact that the Church has spent thousands of dollars in printing and distributing the Book of Mormon, and that tens of thousands of missionaries have been sent with its message to the nations of the earth. Why has the Church done this? In order to perpetuate fraud? Verily, no; but that the world might have a new witness for God and His Christ, and be brought to a knowledge of the everlasting Gospel, the principles and ordinances of which, as I have said, are set forth in great plainness in the Book of Mormon.

I have read Joseph Smith's account of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon many times, and I am thoroughly convinced that he spoke the truth. It is much easier for me to believe Joseph Smith's account of the origin of the Book of Mormon than it would be for me to believe that the wonderful story, with all its details, was the product of Joseph Smith's imagination. It is surprising to me that intelligent people can believe that an unlearned and unsophisticated youth like Joseph Smith could make up such a story. No, the story is too big, too great, too wonderful, for the mind of

mortal man to conceive. When I was a child I learned a number of nursery rhymes, among them the following:

"Sing a song of sixpence, a wee peck of rye,
Four and twenty blackbirds baked in a pie;
When the pie was opened the birds began to sing,
Wasn't that a dainty dish to set before the king?"

Now, when someone succeeds in making me believe that twenty-four blackbirds were caught, killed, plucked, baked in a pie, and that when the pie was opened the birds came out and began to sing, then perhaps I may be led to believe that Joseph Smith manufactured, out of whole cloth, his wonderful story of the origin of the Book of Mormon. But not until then.

I believe the Book of Mormon because I believe the Bible – because I believe the prophets, Christ and the apostles. There are in the Bible numerous prophecies concerning the Book of Mormon, and it may be interesting to the reader to hear how – by means of these prophecies – I succeeded in persuading a family to read the Book of Mormon. They afterward became members of the Church of Christ. The first time I visited the family I taught them about the true and living God – in whose image man is created – and about Jesus Christ, His Only Begotten Son, the Savior and Redeemer of the world. On my second visit I taught them the principles of faith and repentance. The third time I visited the family I taught them the ordinances of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins and the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost. On succeeding visits I showed that it is necessary for a

man to hold Divine authority – to be "called of God, as was Aaron," – in order for him to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof. I also explained the organization of the Church of Christ, with "apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers," etc. I brought forth evidence from the Bible in support of all these things, and as the members of the family were firm believers in the Holy Scriptures, they acknowledged that what I had taught them was true.

But when I next visited the family, I found that a great change had come over them. Instead of giving me a cordial welcome, as they had done before, they received me coldly. I soon learned the reason. Addressing me, the wife and mother said: "I feel that we have come to the parting of the ways. For days I have had the impression that this evening you would present to us the Book of Mormon and try to persuade us to accept it as the word of God. If such is your intention you may just as well leave now, for I do not think you could ever succeed in getting us to believe the Book of Mormon."

I asked the good woman if she had ever read the Book of Mormon. She confessed she had not, she had not even seen the book, neither had any member of the family. I said I considered it rather unfair for people to pass judgment on a book without having read it. Then I asked the lady if she believed the things I had taught her and the members of her family, on my former visits. Yes, she believed all of them – because I had proved them by the Bible.

"Then, if I prove to you by the Bible that the Book

of Mormon is true, you will also believe the Book of Mormon?"

To this she replied: "If you prove to us by evidence from the Bible that the Book of Mormon is a true record, we will believe the Book of Mormon, just as we believe the Bible." This the other members of the family likewise agreed to.

"Before considering the Book of Mormon," I said, "I desire to say a few words concerning the coming of Christ. God, as you very well know, did not send His Son into the world without telling the world about His coming. For hundreds of years prior to the birth of the Savior the children of Israel were taught in divers ways, concerning Him – concerning His birth, His life, and also His death upon the cross. The sacrifices offered by Adam and his sons were similitudes of the sacrifice of the only begotten Son of God, as was also the sacrifice which the Almighty required of Abraham, of which we read in the 22nd chapter of Genesis:

" 'And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am.

" 'And he said, take now thy son, thine only Isaac, whom thous lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.' " (Genesis 22:1, 2.)

"This sacrifice, while required of Abraham as a test of his faith, was a type of a far greater sacrifice – the sacrifice of the Son of God. And we have reason for believing that Abraham saw in his sacrifice a type of

the sacrifice of the only begotten of the Father, for Christ, while addressing the Jews on one occasion, said: 'Your Father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad.'" (John 8:56.)

"In Abraham and Isaac we have a representation of God and Christ – a coming event casting its shadow before it.

"Later, the Lord taught the children of Israel in a still clearer way concerning the sacrifice of His beloved Son, as recorded in the 12th chapter of Exodus:

"'And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying,

* * * * * *

"'Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for a house.

* * * * * *

"'Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it from the sheep or from the goats:

"'And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month; and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.

"'And they shall take the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it:

* * * * * *

"'And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste; it is the Lord's passover.

"'For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the first born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast;

and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment, I am the Lord.

" 'And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.

" 'And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast day by an ordinance forever.' (Exodus 12:1, 5-7, 11-14.)

"It is needless for me to tell you," I said to the family, "that the sacrificial lamb was a type of the Lamb of God, and that the blood of the lamb which was shed to save the first-born of the children of Israel was a representation of the blood of Christ which was to be shed to save the world."

They told me that such was their understanding of the Scriptures.

I continued: "In the 21st chapter of Numbers we are told about another way in which the children of Israel were taught concerning the Messiah." I read the following:

" 'And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt, to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread.

" 'And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much of the people of Israel died.

" 'Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee; pray unto the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people.

" 'And the Lord saith unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that everyone that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live

" 'And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.' " (Numbers 21:5-9.)

Then the lady of the house said: "This Scripture is quite clear to us. We see in the serpent on the pole a type of the Savior on the cross. In His conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus said, 'And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up. That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' " (John 3:14, 15.)

Addressing the family again, I said: "I now desire to show you how, by means of prophecy, the Jews were taught concerning the Messiah. We find in the 7th chapter of Isaiah the following plain prediction relative to the birth of the Savior:

" 'Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign: Behold, a virgin shall concieve, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.' (Isaiah 7.14.)

"And by another prophet the Almighty foretold the place of the Redeemer's birth as follows:

" 'But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be a ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from old, from everlasting.' (Micah 5:2.)

"In the 53rd chapter of Isaiah we find the life of the Savior thus clearly portrayed by the prophet:

" 'Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?

" 'For he shall grow up before him a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground; he hath no form nor comliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

" 'He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

" 'Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

" 'But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

" 'All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

" 'He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep, before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

" 'He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

" 'And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

" 'Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.

" 'He shall see the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

" 'Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoils with the strong; because he hath poured out

his soul unto death; and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.' " (Isaiah 53.)

It was the firm belief of the family that in Jesus Christ – and in Him alone – all these things had been fulfilled:

He was the sacrifice foreshadowed in the sacrifices offered by Adam and his sons.

He was the sacrifice of which Isaac was a type.

He was the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world, and typified in the lamb sacrificed by the children of Israel in their passover.

He was the One raised up to heal the nations of the terrible consequence of sin, even as the brazen serpent was lifted up to heal the afflicted Israelites.

He was the One Isaiah had prophesied would be born of a virgin.

He was the Ruler prophesied of by Micah, who would come out of Bethlehem.

He was the One referred to by Isaiah, who would be "led as a lamb to the slaughter," who would be "wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities," and with whose "stripes we are healed."

Having thus spoken concerning Christ, I set to work to try to convince the family – with evidences from the Bible – that the Book of Mormon is true. I first called their attention to the following prophecy made by Jacob concerning his son Joseph:

"Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall:

"The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him:

"But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel.)

"Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts and of the womb:

"The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills; they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren." (Genesis 49:22-26.)

I asked the family if they knew about the fulfillment of this prophecy. No, they did not. They had read the prophecy, but they did not know when or how it had been fulfilled.

I told them that, according to the Book of Mormon, in the year 600 B. C., a little company of Israelites, descendents of Joseph, the son of Jacob, was led by the Lord from Jerusalem to the land that is now called America, where they became a great nation. Many prophets were raised up among them, who taught them the commandments of God, and also concerning the coming of Christ, even as the prophets had taught the people on the eastern continent. They kept, on metallic plates, a record of the important events that took place among them, and also of the Lord's dealings with them. After his resurrection, Christ appeared to them, and

ministered unto them. He taught them the Gospel and established His Church among them. For nearly 400 years afterwards they lived in peace and happiness. Then pride began to manifest itself among them, they became divided, contentions followed, and later terrible wars, in which countless thousands of lives were sacrificed. A short time before his death, Moroni, the last of their prophets, at the command of the Lord, finished their records and buried them in the earth, in a hill named Cumorah. There they lay for hundreds of years. On the 21st of September, 1823, Moroni appeared to Joseph Smith and told him about the sacred records which he (Moroni) had deposited in Cumorah. Four years later Joseph Smith was permitted to take the records from their hiding place. Through the gift and power of God he translated them into English, the result of his work being the Book of Mormon. This is, in brief, a history of the branches of Joseph referred to by Jacob – the branches that ran over the wall (the great ocean) even "unto the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills.

The family manifested interest in what I told them, but were by no means ready to accept the Book of Mormon as the word of God. I asked them if they were familiar with the prophecy Isaiah had made concerning the branches of the house of Israel to which I had just referred. No, their attention had never been called to such a prophecy. We read as follows:

"And thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be, as of one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust." (Isaiah 29:4.)

"I have just told you, my friends," I said, "how this prophecy was fulfilled. I told you about the branches of the house of Israel that were brought down, even unto destruction. I also told you how these people had – by means of their records – spoken "out of the ground," and "whispered out of the dust," just as the Prophet Isaiah predicted.

"There is a somewhat similar prophecy, made by the Psalmist David, which is recorded in the 85th Psalm, as follows:

" 'Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven.' (Psalms 85:11.)

"This prophecy was fulfilled when the angel Moroni came down from heaven and when a volume of truth (the Book of Mormon) came out of the earth.

"There is another prophecy, made by Isaiah, concerning a sealed book that was to come forth. This prophecy was, as I shall show you, literally fulfilled soon after the plates of the Book of Mormon had been delivered to Joseph Smith. This is the prophecy:

" 'And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed.

" 'And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned.

" 'Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their hearts far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:

" 'Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvelous work among

this people, even a marvelous work and a wonder; for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.' " (Isaiah 29:11-14.)

The members of the family were entirely ignorant concerning this prophecy. They had never heard of it, and did not know anything about its fulfillment. They listened attentively while I related how the prophecy had been fulfilled. I told them that soon after Joseph Smith had commenced the work of translating the engravings on the plates, a man named Martin Harris, who had befriended the prophet, came to him and asked permission to take the characters which Joseph had copied to the city of New York, to show to a learned man there. To this Joseph readily consented. This is what Mr. Harris told the Prophet on his return:

"I went to the city of New York, and presented the characters which had been translated, with the translation thereof, to Professor Charles Anthon, a gentleman celebrated for his literary attainments. Professor Anthon stated that the translation was correct, more so than any he had before seen translated from the Egyptian. I then showed him those which were not translated, and he said that they were Egyptian, Chaldaic, Assyriac, and Arabic; and he said they were true characters. He gave me a certificate, certifying to the people of Palmyra that they were true characters, and that the translation of such of them as had been translated was also correct. I took the certificate and put it into my pocket, and was just leaving the house when Mr. Anthon called me back, and asked me how the young man found out that there were gold plates in the place where he found them. I answered that an angel of God had revealed it unto him. He then said to me, 'Let me see that certificate.' I accordingly took it out of my pocket and gave it to him, when he took it and tore it to pieces,

saying that there was no such thing as ministering of angels, and that if I would bring the plates to him, he would translate them. I informed him that part of the plates were sealed, and that I was forbidden to bring them. He replied, 'I cannot read a sealed book.' I left him and went to Dr. Mitchell, who sanctioned what Professor Anthon had said respecting both the characters and the translation." (See History of the Church, Vol. 1, p. 20.)

Having shown how Isaiah's prophecy with reference to the sealed book had been fulfilled, I directed the attention of the family to the following prophecy, made by Ezekiel:

"The word of the Lord came again unto me, saying,

"Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, for Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions; then take another stick, and write upon it, for Joseph, the stick of Ephriam, and for all the house of Israel his companions:

"And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand.

"And when the children of thy people shall speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not show us what thou meanest by these?

"Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand.

"And the sticks whereon thou writest shall be in thine hand before their eyes." (Ezekiel 37:15-20.)

Here was another remarkable prophecy which had entirely escaped the attention of these good people, notwithstanding they had read the Bible for years. I

asked them what they thought the prophet meant by "the stick of Judah," and the mother replied that, in her opinion, he referred to the Jewish Scriptures, the Bible. Questioned concerning "the stick of Joseph," they confessed they knew nothing about it. Taking up the Bible and the Book of Mormon, I held the two precious records in my hand, and said: "Behold the fulfillment of Ezekial's prophecy! Here you see the 'stick of Judah' and also 'the stick of Joseph,' and the two have become one in my hand."

The members of the family looked at each other, and the father said, "We have heard things this evening we never heard before. Why has our minister not told us about these prophecies and their fulfillment?"

I replied: "In all probability your minister does not know about their fulfillment, hence his silence concerning them. People cannot tell what they do not know."

I continued: "Now, in connection with the prophecy which Ezekial made concerning the two sticks that were to be joined together, I will read you what Christ said concerning two flocks of sheep which He had, and which He said would be gathered into one fold. Here are His words, as recorded in the 10th chapter of John:

" 'I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.

" 'As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.

" 'And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.' (John 10:14-16.)

"Some people entertain the erroneous belief," I said, "that the 'other sheep' to which Christ referred were the Gentiles, but such is not the case. Christ did not recognize the Gentiles as His sheep, they did not hear His voice, His labors were confined to 'the lost sheep of the house of Israel.' Hear the words which He spoke to His disciples on the western continent, as recorded in the Book of Mormon.

" 'And verily, I say unto you, that ye are they of whom I said, other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd.

" 'And they understood me not, for they supposed it had been the Gentiles; for they understood not that the Gentiles should be converted through their preaching;

" 'And they understood not that I said they shall hear my voice: and they understood me not that the Gentiles should not at any time hear my voice, that I should not manifest myself unto them, save it were by the Holy Ghost.

" 'But, behold, ye have both heard my voice, and seen me; and ye are my sheep, and ye are numbered among those whom the Father hath given me.' " (III Nephi 15:21-24.)

A member of the family said: "I am one of those who believed that Christ referred to the Gentiles as the other sheep which He had, but I see now that I was mistaken. It is true, as you have said, the Savior did not minister to the Gentiles; they did not hear His voice, the Gospel was not taken to them until after His resurrection and ascension."

By this time the family was deeply interested in my

message. I told them there was one more Scripture to which I desired to draw their attention. It was an extract from the account of a glorious vision which the Lord gave to His servant John, while the apostle was on the Isle of Patmos. Turning to the 14th chapter of the Book of Revelation, I read the following:

"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue and people,

"Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come, and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." (Rev. 14:6, 7.)

The family entertained a strong belief in John's vision – they believed that in the hour of God's judgments an angel would come to earth; that he would bring with him the everlasting Gospel, which would be preached to every nation, kindred, tongue and people. I told my friends they were very much like the Jews, who are looking for a Savior to come that has already come. They were looking for an angel to come that had come; for the restoration of the Gospel that had been restored; for a missoinary work to commence that had been in operation for years. I told them the heavenly messenger whom John saw in vision was the angel Moroni, who appeared to Joseph Smith, and revealed to him the existence of the Book of Mormon, which contains the fulness of the everlasting Gospel, which Gospel is now being preached among the nations, "as a witness," before the end comes.

"And now, my friends," I said, "let us review the

Scriptures I have quoted to prove that the Book of Mormon is a true record:

"In the 49th chapter of Genesis you read the prophecy which Jacob made concerning his son Joseph. You heard how the prophecy was fulfilled when the Lord led a company of people, descendants of Joseph, from Jerusalem to the western continent, where they became a great nation.

"In the 29th chapter of Isaiah you read a prophecy which had been made concerning these people – that they would be 'brought down', that they would 'speak out of the ground,' and that their speech would 'whisper out of the dust.' You heard how this prophecy had been fulfilled in the coming forth of the Book of Mormon.

"In the 85th Psalm you read the prophecy made by David, namely, that truth would 'spring out of the earth,' and righteousness 'look down from heaven.' This prophecy was fulfilled when the angel Moroni appeared to Joseph Smith and when the Book of Mormon came out of the earth.

"In the 29th chapter of Isaiah you read a prophecy concerning a sealed book that was to come forth, and you heard how the prophecy had been fulfilled to the letter.

"In the 37th chapter of Ezekiel you read a prophecy concerning two sticks – the stick of Judah and the stick of Joseph. Here on the table lie the two sticks referred to by the prophet – the Bible and the Book of Mormon.

"In the 10th chapter of the Gospel according to St. John you read the words of Christ concerning the sheep He had which were not of the fold at Jerusalem. I told you about these other sheep, the sheep of the western fold, who heard the voice of the Good Shepherd as He ministered to them after His resurrection.

"In the 14th chapter of Revelation you read about the glorious vision which the Lord gave to His servant John on the Isle of Patmos, in which the apostle saw an angel 'flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel, to be preached to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people.' You heard how these things have come to pass.

"And now if you want to know if what I have told you this evening is true, I commend to you the words of the Prophet Moroni, engraven by him on the gold plates a short time before his death:

" 'Behold I would exhort you that when ye shall read these things, if it be wisdom in God that ye should read them, that ye would remember how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men, from the creation of Adam even down unto the time that ye receive these things, and ponder it over in your hearts. And when ye shall recieve these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost.' (Moroni 10:3-5.)

"There is much additional evidence which I could adduce to establish the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon, but I will let what I have submitted to you

this evening suffice. If people – especially professing Christians – will not believe the prophets, Christ, and the apostles, they would not believe though one should rise from the dead.

"And now, my friends, I ask, What are you going to do? Are you going to believe the Scriptures, or are you going to follow the example of the Jews, who notwithstanding all that the prophets had written concerning Christ, rejected Him, and brought upon themselves condemnation?"

The family purchased the Book of Mormon, they read it carefully, they followed the advice given by Moroni, and they received from the Father – as have thousands of others, the writer included – the witness of the Spirit that the Book of Mormon is indeed and of a truth the word of God.

THE TESTIMONY OF THREE WITNESSES

Be it known unto all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, unto whom this work shall come: That we, through the grace of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, have seen the plates which contain this record, which is a record of the people of Nephi, and also of the Lamanites, their brethren, and also of the people of Jared, who came from the tower of which hath been spoken. And we also know that they have been translated by the gift and power of God, for his voice hath declared it unto us; wherefore we know of a surety that the work is true. And we also testify that we have seen the engravings which are upon the plates; and they have been shown unto us by the power of God, and not of man. And we declare with words of soberness, that an angel of God came down from heaven, and he brought and laid before our eyes, that we beheld and saw the plates, and the engravings thereon; and we know that it is by the grace of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, that we beheld and bear record that these things are true. And it is marvelous in our eyes. Nevertheless, the voice of the Lord commanded us that we should bear record of it; wherefore, to be obedient unto the commandments of God we bear testimony of these things. And we know that if we are faithful in Christ, we shall rid our garments of the blood of all men, and be found spotless before the judgment-seat of Christ, and shall dwell with him eternally in the heavens. And the honor be

to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, which is one God. Amen.

OLIVER COWDERY,
DAVID WHITMER,
MARTIN HARRIS.

AND ALSO THE TESTIMONY OF EIGHT WITNESSES

Be it known unto all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people unto whom this work shall come: That Joseph Smith, Jun., the translator of this work, has shown unto us the plates of which hath been spoken, which have the appearance of gold; and as many of the leaves as the said Smith has translated we did handle with our hands; and we also saw the engravings thereon, all of which has the appearance of ancient work, and of curious workmanship. And this we bear record with words of soberness, that the said Smith has shown unto us, for we have seen and hefted, and know of a surety that the said Smith has got the plates of which we have spoken. And we give our names unto the world, to witness unto the world that which we have seen. And we lie not, God bearing witness of it.

CHRISTIAN WHITMER,
JACOB WHITMER,
PETER WHITMER, Jun.,
JOHN WHITMER,
HIRAM PAGE,
JOSEPH SMITH, Sen.,
HYRUM SMITH,
SAMUEL H. SMITH.

THE ARTICLES OF FAITH

Of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

1. We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost.

2. We believe that men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam's transgression.

3. We believe that through the atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.

4. We believe that the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel are: (1) Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; (2) Repentance; (3) Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; (4) Laying on of hands for the Gift of the Holy Ghost.

5. We believe that a man must be called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands, by those who are in authority, to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof.

6. We believe in the same organization that existed in the Primitive Church, viz.: Apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, etc.

7. We believe in the gift of tongues, prophecy, revelation, visions, healing, interpretation of tongues, etc.

8. We believe the Bible to be the word of God, as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God.

9. We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet

reveal many great and important things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

10. We believe in the literal gathering of Israel and in the restoration of the Ten Tribes, that Zion will be built upon this (the American) continent; that Christ will reign personally upon the earth and, that the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory.

11. We claim the privilege of worshiping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where, or what they may.

12. We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law.

13. We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men; indeed, we may say that we follow the admonition of Paul—we believe all things, we hope all things, we have endured many things, and hope to be able to endure all things. If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praisworthy, we seek after these things.

JOSEPH SMITH.

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